

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Masterworks of the Classical Haida Myhtellers,  
a boxed set of three volumes:*

*A Story as Sharp as a Knife:*

*The Classical Haida Myhtellers and Their World  
(by Robert Bringhurst);*

*Nine Visits to the Mythworld*

*(by Ghandl of the Qayah! Llaanas);*

*Being in Being: The Collected Works of a Master Haida Myhteller  
(by Skaay of the Qquuna Qiighawaay)*

Robert Bringhurst, Editor and Translator

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2002. 1,146 pp.

Illus., photographs, maps. \$150.00 cloth

TERRY GLAVIN,  
*Mayne Island, BC*

THE IDEA OF a story being as sharp as a knife, which is the title of Robert Bringhurst's astonishing introduction to the works of classical Haida poets, is a useful proposition to consider in order to make sense of all the fuss and argument that has accompanied it and the publication of its two sister titles.

The idea derives from what might be called a maxim, which was once well known among the Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit, and

other Northwest Coast peoples: "The world is as sharp as a knife." It's a peculiar thing to say. The world appears anything but knife-edged. It is broad and flat, as far as the eye can see. In one folktale, a careless son points this out to his father and stamps on the ground to repudiate what he imagines to be a pointless aphorism. A splinter pierces his foot, which causes him to die soon afterwards.

A story, too, can be as sharp as a knife. It might wound, or reveal what only a

knife will disclose below the surface of a thing, or it might puncture old ideas, some fatally. The point is that a story, even a story we all thought we knew well, can contain meaning that is utterly unaccounted for by conventional methods, in the same way that the careless son dismisses wise counsel in the folktale.

This, then, is the point Bringhurst makes so brilliantly and thoroughly in this trilogy, and it is also the thing that has gotten him into such trouble. What Bringhurst reveals in the works of Haida mythtellers such as Skaay and Ghandl is meaning and substance that cannot be accounted for by standard anthropological methodology. While his most vociferous detractors may stamp their feet, Bringhurst ably defends the proposition that the Haida texts he has translated are examples of a literature of great complexity and power.

Further, he considers Skaay and Ghandl to have been great artists in their own right, whose works should stand with the great classics of epic literature.

Bringhurst studied linguistics under Noam Chomsky in the 1960s and has worked as a professional translator of Greek and Arabic. He is considered North America's leading authority on typography, but he is first and foremost a poet, perhaps best known for his collections *The Beauty of Their Weapons* and *The Calling*. Bringhurst began translating Haida texts after developing an intense interest in Haida art and culture, having authored a study of the works of Haida sculptor Bill Reid, *The Black Canoe*, and co-authored, with Reid, *Raven Steals the Light*.

Among the many contributions Bringhurst makes with *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* is a translation of the five movements of Skaay's *Raven Travelling*, in 1,400 lines. It is the result of Bringhurst's chance discovery of a frayed binder that had been mislabelled as a letterpress

book at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., which contained the long-lost first page of Skaay's epic, along with a full copy of the original transcripts of Skaay's recitation of the work to the linguist John Reed Swanton in 1900. This chance find allowed Bringhurst to extricate from the known sources the entire, unabridged version of Skaay's *Raven Travelling (Poem of the Elders)*.

The second in the trilogy is a collection of the works of the blind Haida poet Ghandl, *Nine Visits to the Mythworld*. Ghandl, of the Eagle Clan, was born at Sea Lion Town (*Qaysun Llanagaay*) on the outer west coast of the Queen Charlottes' archipelago. His "missionary name" was Walter McGregor.

The third in the trilogy, *Being in Being*, is a collection of the works of Skaay, also of the Eagle Clan, from the village of Ttaanu, a village in the southerly portions of the Haida archipelago, in what is now the South Moresby National Park Reserve.

Clearly, there's a lot more going on here than the mere recitation of time-worn "legends." There's also more to all this than a "poetic" codification of Aboriginal customary laws. What's going on here, Bringhurst asserts, is epic poetry that ranks with *Beowulf*, *The Iliad*, and *The Ramayana*.

Bringhurst is not the first to make such comparisons. John Reed Swanton, the young linguist whose 1900-01 sessions with Skaay and Ghandl provided the raw material for Bringhurst's trilogy, also saw classic poetry in the oral traditions he was recording. It was like "constructing a nation's literature," Swanton wrote, "or rather like Homer collecting and arranging a literature already constructed" (*A Story Sharp As A Knife*, p. 175.)

While the discipline of anthropology quickly evolved in directions that would leave no room for such characterizations, Bringhurst, a full century after Swanton,

is happy to revive that train of thought.

It has been a terrible mistake to dismiss mythtellers such as Skaay and Ghandl as mere “informants,” Bringhurst says. They were great poets, masters of their art, and they deserve to be recognized as such.

This isn't the sort of thing one easily asserts, especially among anthropologists: even the eminent Alfred Kroeber insisted that there was no “poetry” or “philosophy” to be found among North America's Aboriginal cultures. And so judgments are rendered. They began in 1999, shortly after *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* was first published.

The book was initially greeted with enthusiastic reviews in such newspapers as the *Globe and Mail*, the *Montreal Gazette*, and the *National Post*. It was short-listed for the Governor-General's Award for Non-Fiction. In spite of the response, or perhaps because of it, certain Haida political leaders began to complain publicly that Bringhurst had not asked their permission to use Haida stories. A linguist who works with official Haida approval created a Web site devoted solely to disseminating his own 8,200-word condemnation of Bringhurst's book.

Adverse judgments in the academic press have continued, most recently with an attack on *A Story as Sharp as a Knife* that appeared in the September 2002 issue of the University of Washington's *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*.

“It's like an infection, and it's still there,” Bringhurst observed in a recent conversation. “I don't expect it will go away in my lifetime. I have violated protocol on every front. I have no PhD. I have no faculty position. I did not ask permission from the Haida.”

It is not as though Bringhurst is without supporters among academics. His efforts have been lauded by several anthropologists and linguists, including Dell Hymes, Hugh Brody, Regna Darnell, and Victor Golla. But the tragedy is that all the rumpus-

making has drawn attention away from the utterly breathtaking works of the very poets that Bringhurst laboured more than a decade to redeem and introduce to the wider world.

Bringhurst is not the only contemporary poet or linguist to see works of great art within the “Swanton texts.” The American poet Gary Snyder, for instance, subjected Swanton's version of Skaay's *He Who Hunted Birds in His Father's Village* to a book-length treatment after first encountering the text as an undergraduate in the early 1950s. Also, Dell Hymes was drawn to Swanton's translations and the verse structure of the Haida texts, noting – significantly, for Bringhurst's purposes – that literary texts should be understood as “open” documents that might lend themselves to many differing translations and interpretations.

Also, happily, Ghandl's *Nine Visits to the Mythworld* made it to the Canadian short list of the Griffin Poetry Prize in 2001 – a belated recognition of the poetic merit of works recited a century earlier.

It would be hard not to see poetry in, say, the lines from Ghandl's “Those Who Stay a Long Way Out to Sea”:

*Then they set off, they say,  
After they travelled a ways,  
a wren sang to one side of them.  
They could see that it punctured  
a blue hole through the heart  
of the one that had passed closest to it,  
they say.*

Similarly, Skaay's rendering of “Raven Travelling” is obviously much more than a mere rote-memorized recital of an origin myth:

*After a time, at the toe of the Islands,  
there was one rock awash.  
He flew there to sit.  
Like sea-cucumbers, gods lay across it,  
Putting their mouths against it, side  
by side.*

*The newborn gods were sleeping, out  
along the reef,  
Their heads and tails in all directions.*

The three-volume *Masterworks of the Classical Haida Myhtellers* boxed set comes with a useful twenty-three-page interview with Bringhurst conducted by Thérèse Rigaud, in which Bringhurst makes the case that Haida is a literary language, like classical Chinese or classical Greek, and that the sagas of myhtellers such as Ghandl and Skaay must be recognized for the great literature that they are.

Bringhurst insists that there is no “cultural appropriation” at work here, and indeed, the Haida myhtellers Swanton engaged were willing participants in a project they fully understood. They were also paid on an hourly rate in amounts

equivalent to Swanton’s salary and the salary earned by Swanton’s interpreter, Henry Moody, of Skidegate. The endeavour was, in every respect, beneficial to everybody involved.

“What is at work here is something rather more troubling,” Bringhurst says: “It has been the fate of almost all of North America’s aboriginal literature to remain hidden away in obscure monographs and in unpublished field notes” (interview with Robert Bringhurst, March 2002). “Instead of being read side by side with the works of Herodotus, aboriginal literature is largely ignored,” Bringhurst says, conceding that he cannot fully explain why this is so. “I think this remains an unanswered question,” he said. “It is a question one should at least keep on asking.”

### *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*

Susan Neylan

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003.

xvii, 401 pp. Illus., tables, maps. \$75.00 cloth

J.R. MILLER,

*University of Saskatchewan*

**W**RITING IN *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (University of Toronto Press, 1984, 250) of seventeenth-century Jesuit missions to the Huron, John Webster Grant quoted a Huron man as saying to a missionary, “You must know that we have a ‘yes’ that means ‘no’.” Grant was explaining the apparent reluctance of First Nations converts to embrace all of Christian doctrine or to give up Aboriginal practices completely. His introduction of the notion of ambivalence

towards Christianity among supposedly converted Aboriginal people in *Moon of Wintertime* was an important first step in modifying historical analysis of missionization, a process of revision that had been under way for over a decade in fur trade studies and was emerging in examinations of Indian policy about the time Grant published his landmark volume. Since then historians’ consideration of what “conversion” truly meant among Aboriginal peoples has advanced significantly. The process of revising and deepening understanding has also been

noticeable in studies of evangelism on the Northwest Coast. To mention only one important work that contributed to the process of extending scholarly understanding of what Christian missionaries did and how they were received, Clarence Bolt's *Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian: Small Shoes for Feet Too Large* (UBC Press, 1992) explained that some Tsimshian recruited Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby for their own purposes and that his flock withdrew support from him when he ceased to be effective in representing their interests on the emerging land question. Over the past twenty years, then, the study of Christian missions to Aboriginal peoples has evolved to yield a more complex, more nuanced understanding of Aboriginal responses to Christianity.

Susan Neylan's *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*, a revision of her UBC doctoral dissertation, continues this advance in scholarly understanding of the impact of the missionization process. A central argument of this uncommonly perceptive and persuasive work organized around the concepts of "syncretism, convergence, and dualism" (15) is that "religious encounters between Natives and missionaries were dialogic meetings" (270) in which each of the parties influenced the other. Focusing on "the cultural brokers and 'middlemen,'" (22) Neylan takes the position that "Christianity ... was indeed an 'authentic' Native experience" (26). To make her case, Neylan examines the spiritual topography of Tsimshian society and the missionaries' outlook and arrival in Tsimshian territory before proceeding to an examination, first, of the process of "proselytizing from within" and then converting women and families. A general chapter on Native missionaries, an important and revealing group, is followed by a

closer examination of one of them – Anglican Arthur Wellington Clah. The volume concludes with a series of topical examinations of prophets and revivals, of everyday practices ("The Politics of Everyday Life"), and of the implications of Tsimshian-Christian contentions over the organization of domestic space and public sites such as the potlatch and totem poles.

Throughout, Neylan strives to keep the focus as much as possible on the Native "converts." This is a noteworthy achievement because the plenitude of missionary sources and the challenge of interpreting Native evidence for a non-Native researcher push such an investigator towards seeing the process from the evangelists' perspective. She is perceptive and imaginative in trying always to see the words, reactions, and emotions of the Native people she is studying from a Tsimshian cultural perspective as well as from a Christian Euro-Canadian viewpoint. So, for example, *The Heavens are Changing* reinterprets the familiar encounter between Tsimshian Legeex (Legaic) and Church Missionary Society evangelist William Duncan over the operation of his mission school during the winter feasting season. In the traditional literature, a potentially violent chief is faced down by a calm missionary, resulting in the Indian's defeat and eventual conversion to a model Christian life (as a carpenter, no less). Neylan probes deeper. Using Tsimshian accounts of the same encounter, she explains that it was Legeex's responsibility as leader of a feasting society to ensure the safety of Tsimshian involved in the winter observances. The ringing of the school bell was a menace that needed to be stopped because it could distract those involved in powerful ceremonies. "This was done to ensure the spiritual safety of the initiates undergoing important trans-

formations" (98). The author provides similar bicultural readings, such as her depiction of the equally famous "religious excitement" at Metlakatla that challenged Duncan's regime (192-7). The result of such readings is to enrich and deepen the reader's understanding of what was taking place in the encounter between missionary and Native.

The volume's many insights and interpretations are unified by an approach that might be summarized as Death to Dichotomies! (At times one is reminded of Joy Parr's critique of "binary oppositions" and "analytical dualism" in *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950* [University of Toronto Press, 1990].) Traditionally understood polarities in the encounter of Tsimshian and Christian messenger are invariably shown by Neylan to have been more complex, more ambivalent – and consequently more interesting – than was previously thought. So, for example, on the complicated issues of the land question and Canadian government attempts to assert sovereignty over the Tsimshian, Christianized Tsimshian did not always react in the same manner. "Christian Tsimshian aligned with [non-Native] Christians on some issues, and stood unified with their Aboriginal relations against the church on others" (275). The complexity of Tsimshian Christianity and the irrelevance of dichotomies is perhaps best symbolized in one of the closing images in *The Heavens are Changing*. Neylan tells of a Tsimshian chief who spoke on the land question. "As the chief spoke, he held a Bible in his left hand and an eagle feather, a Native symbol of peace, in his right hand. He told the chiefs and elders in attendance that one was not stronger than the other" (276). The image nicely captures the dialogic, inclusive quality of Tsimshian Christianity that the book explains so well.

In such a fine study, there is little about which to complain. However, sometimes the author's pursuit of a bicultural reading of an event or phenomenon seems strained. Seeing flag poles as substitutes for totem poles (263-4) is a bit of stretch, although the following reading of gravestones as substitutes for totem poles seems more plausible. Also unfortunate is Neylan's neglect of some secondary literature that might have enriched her understanding of the missionary processes she was examining. For example, although the volume is noteworthy for its thorough canvass of relevant theoretical and monographic literature, material on Methodist missions among the Ojibwa in nineteenth-century Ontario is overlooked. The literature on Upper Canadian non-Native and Native missionaries, including in particular Peter Jones (Kahkewaquaonaby, Sacred Feathers), might have been important background for understanding the ministrations of English-born but Ontario-trained Thomas Crosby among the Tsimshian. This neglect seems all the stranger given Neylan's heavy and appropriate reliance on Grant's *Moon of Wintertime* and William Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

Minor cavils aside, *The Heavens are Changing* is an important work of reinterpretation that advances the historiography of the missionization process substantially. Moreover, its relevance transcends the Northwest Coast and British Columbia. The sophistication of its method and the sensitivity of the author's interpretation represent a model that could well be applied to many other regions where indigenous peoples and Christianity got caught up, to use John Webster Grant's formulation, in encounter.

*The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture and Power on  
Canada's West Coast*

Bruce Braun

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

xiv, 347 pp. Illus., maps. US\$74.95 cloth / US\$24.95 paper

H. V. NELLES,  
*York University*

WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES dancers yearn to sing or painters to write? Why are academics fundamentally unhappy within their disciplines? Inside each academician there seems to be an alter ego struggling to get out. Scratch a historian, it is said, and you will find a novelist; economists are humourists manqué. On the evidence of this book, geographers would really rather be philosophers.

When I was asked to review a book entitled *The Intemperate Rainforest*, I expected it would be about trees. But Bruce Braun's book is really about words, and also paintings, photographs, advertisements, posters, diagrams, and (occasionally) maps. Had the book been about trees, I would have been notionally within the boundaries of my competence. But as it concerns itself primarily with the philosophical conception of the West Coast forest, I must confess as a reader to have spent much of my time lost in the epistemological woods. I came away with a vague sense that something useful and important had been said, but I could not be certain of this, specify it precisely, or shake off the uneasiness that perhaps amidst all the verbal cleverness I'd been had.

In the beginning was the word and words make forests. In this geography of the mind, Braun sets out to map the conceptual grid overlaying the physical contours of the West Coast. The recent violent confrontations over logging in

Clayoquot Sound provide him with a point of departure for a series of extended meditations on the social construction of nature in a West Coast setting. Braun takes us back from the white heat of clashing interests and passions to the intellectual realm in which ideas that shape differing perceptions are created. He is mainly interested in the way facts come to be accepted, how the normal gets to be that way, how different perceptions of reality take shape and condition behaviour. Essentially he argues that we can't see the forest for the metaphors.

A discourse on the social construction of nature opens the book. The five chapters that follow in one way or another illustrate the proposition, advanced in the introduction (II), that "nature is socially produced, in the sense that what we see as 'natural' internalizes not only ecological relations but social relations too." "Producing Marginality," connects functionalist ideas about the forest as a tree farm to George Dawson's nineteenth-century Geological Survey reports that severed Native peoples from their habitat through inventory science. "Saving Clayoquot" unpacks the vocabulary of environmentalism, especially photographic imagery that contrasts indigeneity with modernity. Environmentalism too, he argues, denies Native peoples a modern place in nature. "Landscapes of Loss and Mourning" uses a sea kayak adventure tour as a point of departure for an examination of the images, expectations,

and desires that sustain tourism. Again he finds that both forestry and contemporary Native peoples have no legitimate place in the picture. "BC Seeing/Seeing BC" provides a critical reading of Emily Carr's paintings of totems and trees. Here he is at pains to avoid essentialism or reducing her work to a single meaning. Finally, "Picturing the Forest Crisis" uses two apparent satellite images of the Vancouver Island forest cover to expose the intellectual genealogy of the idea of nature as equilibrium. Where does all this lead? To the conclusion that the "forest" is a construction of words and historical concepts, that "there is no site outside culture and language from which to fix once and for all nature's truth or to adjudicate competing epistemological and political claims" (259), and that "there are many forests, not one; there are myriad ways in which the physical worlds of the west coast are imbued with meaning and intelligibility, not a single unassailable truth that once found will show us the way forward" (260).

It must be said that this is a dense, difficult, sometimes exasperating book, but every now and then persistence is rewarded with illuminating aperçus. On the same page (143) that the reader is forced to struggle through semantic sludge such as "despite its supposed distance from an intrusive mass tourism, in its demarcation of the premodern and identification of this space with essential and timeless forms, the critique of Western modernity as colonizing that lies at its core doubles back as colonialism's most paradigmatic form, a sort of environmental orientalism that images modernity's Other as fixed and immutable," Braun tosses off a sparkling gem of insight that suddenly makes clear what he has been trying to say for several pages: "Whereas industrial forestry abstracts one commodity (timber) from

its ecological and cultural context, adventure travel abstracts another ('viewscape') from their ongoing historical construction and places them in the mythic time of the premodern." I was out of my depth on the philosophical issues: I have a nagging suspicion that, from time to time, Braun may have been as well. When geographers do philosophy, someone other than a historian is needed to judge.

The baroque prose is compounded by a predilection for postmodernist word play. But the bigger problem is that at times meaning itself is foregone for effect. For page after page, words are shot off like fireworks, bright bursts of verbiage fly off in all directions, secondary sparkles of learned references shower down in cascades: Bachelard, Bal, Barthes, Baudillard, Bell, Benjamin, Benton, Berkhofer, Berman, Bhabha, Bordieu, Butler – to speak only of the B's. Amidst all of the crackling verbal pyrotechnics, it is often difficult to know what, if anything, is being said. Then, just as suddenly, Braun is back among us offering some thoughtful and comprehensible commentary as he readies himself to fire off another "lit. crit." rocket.

There can be no doubt but that a fertile and critical mind is at work in these pages. Braun subjects everything in his gaze to a relentless interrogation. He has a discerning eye and is skilled at revealing juxtaposition that transcends irony. He is also a sympathetic critic. He takes no pleasure in exploding environmental romanticism; he instinctively shields Native discourse from his withering intellect. When he finds his voice, disciplines his prose, takes his audience into his confidence, and leaves this trail of references behind, Bruce Braun will undoubtedly temper our thinking about nature in important ways.



*Women and the White Man's God:  
Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field*  
Myra Rutherford

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002. 224 pp. \$85.00 cloth / \$29.95 paper

MARGARET VAN DIE  
*Queen's University*

**T**HOUGH THE ENCOUNTER between missionaries and Aboriginals continues to fascinate, the tables have dramatically turned. Where once missionaries saw it as part of their task to explain Aboriginal culture to a White society, in today's scholarly discourse it is the missionary who has become "the other." Challenging the Eurocentric missions approach common among an earlier generation, historians have drawn on poststructuralist and postmodernist theory to reinterpret the missionary endeavour within the wider text of imperial relations and gender identities. In the process, their subjects' idealism and religious motivation have frequently been dismissed or subordinated to more fashionable postcolonial discourses. A welcome corrective, therefore, is this balanced examination of 132 British and Canadian women who were part of the Church of England's mission frontier in northern British Columbia, the Yukon, and the Canadian Arctic from 1860 to 1940. Why the women were attracted to mission work, how they described their new circumstances, and how they interacted with the various Aboriginal cultures they encountered are the focus of this study.

While the emphasis is on the perceptions and experiences of the missionaries and much of the resulting analysis of their preconceived ideas about empire, race, culture, gender, and evangelical religion is predictable, Rutherford goes further to probe as well the extent

to which discourse actually reflected reality. Gender differences, she notes, were tested and amended in the mission field, as middle-class women found themselves performing unconventional tasks, learning to endure isolation, and living off the food provided by the land. A pervasive theme is that, as a result, the boundaries of gender constantly shifted, without, however, undermining the close bonding between women encouraged by the strain of mission work.

Though Rutherford is careful to avoid any hint of glorifying the experiences of her subjects, there are times when the sheer strength of their stories, the level of their commitment to the needs of Aboriginal women and children, transcends her carefully crafted analytical framework. A similar stretching of the theoretical boundaries takes place, with equally insightful results, when she examines the nature and impact of cross-cultural contact. Discourse analysis of missionary writings, with only "one side talking," can easily lead to its own cultural imperialism. This is mitigated here, however, by the fact that a small number of the missionaries were themselves Aboriginal, and by the author's own interest in depicting how, in unexpected ways, White and Aboriginal women found themselves drawn more closely to one another. The missionary experience, as she points out, was filled with ambiguities, such as Aboriginal women's auxiliaries supporting mission work in China, and with such unpredictable out-

comes as Aboriginal women eventually assuming the title – once a missionary self-designation – of “mothers of the church.”

In ways often overlooked by post-colonial historians, Aboriginal women and men, far from being passive “converts” of all-powerful missionaries, played vital, active roles in slowly reshaping Christianity to reflect their own culture. While Rutherforddale sees this as an example of syncretism and a sign of failure on the part of the missionaries, historians of missions such as Andrew Walls have concluded that, on the contrary, such indigenization (to use their term) can be seen as the ultimate sign of success. It would be helpful,

therefore, to know if the god these white Anglican women brought to the North was more amenable to such indigenization than was the religion preached by their male counterparts. A related question, touched on in the concluding chapter, is the extent to which missionaries were able to mitigate some of the enormous problems caused by European settlement by opening opportunities for Aboriginal agency. Here one needs to listen carefully to Aboriginal women’s voices, and while these are not the subject of this book, Rutherforddale’s careful and nuanced reading of missionary discourse does much to provide a new, more fluid, and less dichotomized approach to the study of women, colonization, and missions.

*Too Small to See, Too Big to Ignore: Child Health and Well-being  
in British Columbia*

Michael V. Hayes and Leslie T. Foster

Canadian Western Geographical Series 35,  
Victoria: Western Geographical Press, 2002. xvi, 278 pp. \$30.00 paper

VERONICA STRONG-BOAG,  
*University of British Columbia*

**A**S THE MOST RECENT Statistics Canada reports tell us, poverty continues to stalk British Columbia’s youngest citizens. Their distress, with outcomes measured pitilessly in shortfalls in nutrition, education, and health, is directly associated with the low income of their parents. The irony of the contracting out of services at BC Children’s Hospital (2003) is obvious: the offspring of low-waged workers are disproportionately susceptible to the poor health such institutions are designed to counter. Prevention, however,

as the contributions to this volume repeatedly make clear, comes second best to efforts at remedy when life has already gone badly awry for the province’s youngsters.

As it sorts through the findings and the fallout of the 1990s in particular, this volume provides essential reading for anyone interested in the well-being of Canadians. It is an important counterpart to the valuable volume, *Vulnerable Children: Findings from Canada’s National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth* (2002), edited by J. Douglas Willms.

SFU geography professor Michael Hayes sets the critical tone of the BC collection in his introduction: "It behooves us as guardians of children to be mindful of seeing them, and how we see them, within the organization of social policy, given their inherent lack of competitive political advantage" (1). Contributions from "public servants, academics, and representatives from non-governmental agencies" (3) make very clear the consequences of Canadians' failure to invest in early well-being. In his "Developing an Ecology of Children's Health: Recent International Trends Linking Children's Rights to Determinants of Health," Phillip Cook locates that failure within the wider context of global disparities. Canada signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but it has no reason to take leadership for granted. Cuts to international aid and domestic transfer payments have undermined child health and augmented social disparities.

Michael J. Guralnick next explores "Contemporary Issues in Early Intervention." His review of family-centred theory and practice demonstrates the benefits of early, and often intensive (as with children with autism), intervention and inclusive social practices. Chapter 4, "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: A Literature Review and a Summary of BC Trends" by L.T. Foster, W.J. Kierans, and J. Macdonald, points to promising developments. The incidence of SIDS is falling, even among First Nations populations who here, as in many other areas, suffer disproportionately. Jessica Ball, Alan Pence, and Allison Benner then consider the question of "Quality Child Care and Community Development: What Is the Connection?" Drawing on capacity-building initiatives with First Nations groups in western Canada and a wide-ranging review of programs in the majority and minority world, the authors affirm how quality childcare

strengthens "social cohesion" and furthers "community development" (99). Chapter 6, "Patterns and Trends in Children in the Care of the Province of British Columbia: Ecological, Policy, and Cultural Perspectives" by L.T. Foster and M. Wright, tells a much less happy story: poverty produces children-in-care, but the 1990s saw a diminished political will to increase "employment, educational opportunities, housing assistance, and child care" (134) that would have allowed more families to retain their offspring. In their "Contradictions in Child Welfare," Fay Weller and Brian Wharf suggest what hard times have meant for many mothers: "isolation, hopelessness, distrust, and poverty" (141).

The system's relentless focus on individual fault, even under NDP administrations, has undermined recognition of collective jeopardy and common citizenship. C. Morton, British Columbia's first children's commissioner, 1996-99, a post lost in the BC Liberals' continuing retreat from responsibility, contributed Chapter 8, "Learning from the Past: Improving Child-Serving Systems." This earnest effort, delivered somewhat curiously in the third person, single-mindedly defends efforts to implement the recommendations of the inquiry into the death of Matthew Vaudreuil by Judge Thomas Gove in 1995. Academics Rebecca N. Warburton and William P. Warburton are less defensive in "Toward Evidence-Based Child Policy: What Money Can't Buy," as they come down in favour of pilot programs and quality control, notably with regard to Head Start initiatives. In Chapter 10, "Knowing the Constituency: Youth - Their Health and Behaviour," Roger S. Tonkin and Aileen Murphy consider the diversity revealed by the Adolescent Health Survey administered to BC students in 1992 and 1998. Like several authors here, they emphasize how much young people

appreciated being consulted. Marlene M. Moretti, Roy Holland, and Ken Moore next review treatment prospects for the same age group in "Youth at Risk: Systemic Intervention from an Attachment Perspective." Here, too, evidence is available on what works with many youngsters, but the political will is not there. In Chapter 12, Joseph H. Michalski turns to "Family Dynamics, Labour Market Attachment, and 'At-Risk' Children." Good jobs, he still needs to remind readers, are the best guarantees of good health in children, as in adults.

These authors confirm what we have long known: the solution to children in distress is not simple. Individual commitment, whether from children, parents, or social workers and health professionals, is not sufficient. The problems that produce Matthew and Verna Vaudreuil, both victims of Canada's failure to nurture young citizens, are not solvable without a collective willingness to address the disparities between the haves and the have-nots. In his Epilogue, Michael Hayes offers little cause for optimism as he reviews the record of the

Liberal government elected in 2002:

The assumption made by the powerful people making public policy appears to be that everyone has basically the same life chances, and therefore is entitled only to minimal assistance from the public. Poverty, in this view, appears to be simply the consequences of bad life choices. Disparities in life chances are underplayed, ignored, or used for iconic value – overcoming the odds of poverty is presented as the norm of hard work and successful entrepreneurialship, not the minor miracle that it is. (276)

This assessment, while very true, is also insufficient. It lets all citizens, and the New Democratic Party when in power, off too easily. With conspicuous exceptions, too many of us have failed the province's children. *Too Small to See, Too Big to Ignore* reminds us of this tragedy. Now we need a substantive discussion of why this is so.

*A World Apart: The Crowsnest Communities  
of Alberta and British Columbia*

Wayne Norton and Tom Langford, Editors

Kamloops: Plateau Press, 2002. ix, 202 pp. Illus. \$23.95 paper

DUFF SUTHERLAND  
*Selkirk College*

**A** *WORLD APART*, edited by Wayne Norton and Tom Langford, is a solid collection of essays and memoirs about the experience of living and working in the Crowsnest Pass communities of Alberta and British Columbia in the twentieth century. The

authors collectively reveal how the Canadian Pacific and Great Northern Railways spearheaded the European settler history of the region through the construction of lines to mine and haul the Pass's vast coal deposits. Beginning in the 1890s, mines opened while towns,

sawmills, farms, and ranches also emerged as part of a regional economy. This "history" also created class-conscious communities of workers and their families, who were drawn to the Pass primarily from the British Isles and Central and Eastern Europe. These were people whose backgrounds and experiences in the mines led them to embrace a democratic and often radical unionism, elect socialist and working-class politicians like Charlie O'Brien and Tom Uphill, support local volunteers to fight fascism in Spain in the 1930s, and, in towns such as Blairmore and Natal, to name a boulevard and a park after Tim Buck and Karl Marx, respectively. More broadly, these actions reflected, as Tom Langford describes, the culture of the coal camps, "an alternative vision of community in the Crowsnest, a vision that stressed equality rather than hierarchy, solidarity rather than self-interest and democracy rather than corporate oligarchy" (148). It was these shared values and experiences, the editors argue, that made the Crowsnest communities of Alberta and British Columbia "a world apart" until the late 1950s. By then, the majority of the Pass's underground coal mines had closed as the CPR shifted from steam to diesel locomotives and the forces of "modernity" created more integrated provincial societies.

The great strength of this collection of writing and photographs is the way its contributors – a combination of academic and local historians, current and former residents – vividly document the working lives and experiences of the people of the Pass in the first half of the twentieth century. In Part One, entitled "Society and Culture," a dozen articles and memoirs document family and community life. An important theme that emerges is the particular impact that the mining economy had on women and children, and the important role that

they played in their families' survival. Mining accidents and disasters left behind widows and fatherless children, wives looked after households and farms while husbands mined, women took the few low-paying service jobs available to them in mining towns to help their families, and women and children walked sometimes violent picket lines. At the same time, families needed boys to leave school early to mine while "female students could [not] escape the family and social tensions of frequent strikes and disputes at the collieries" (34). Growing up in Fernie, Mary Giuliano remembers that she worked in the family vegetable garden and, as the eldest child, helped her father add an extension to their house. Other articles discuss the importance of music, dances, May Day, sports, and religious revivals to these communities. One has to admire the independence and autonomy of miners who played soccer at a very high level for Fernie United without coaches. A final important dimension of Part One is the immigrant experience. Most immigrants who stayed appeared to have fond memories of their experience in the Pass, but we also learn about a desperately unhappy mother who died young, parents who eventually lived apart, discrimination at work, and prejudice towards immigrant children.

Part Two examines the political economy of the Pass. As Robert McDonald points out in his excellent chapter on the popular working class MLA, Tom Uphill, "it was coal mining that dominated the economic and social landscape" (101). This meant that mining accidents and disasters in the Pass were community and regional disasters, communities boomed and busted with coal industry, and miner union locals were among the most important political and social institutions in the region. Although there is surprisingly little here about

working underground and class conflict, the experience of work clearly radicalized miners who supported the One Big Union, developed “deep historical links” to the Communist Party of Canada, and maintained a critical stance towards the leadership of the United Mine Workers of America. The writers in this part of the book also provide evidence that Pass miners never saw themselves as “a world apart” from the broader working-class movement: they joined campaigns against regressive labour laws across Canada, sent money to striking workers outside the region, and supported progressive causes around the world. In the end, however, what lingers in the mind from these articles and memoirs is a strong historical sense of the people and their lives: the miner David Murray, who survived the initial explosion at Hillcrest in 1914 but died trying rescue his three sons; the picketing miners’ wives and children in Corbin in 1932 whom the Mounties cleared with a bulldozer; the photograph of men and boys about to enter Number Two Mine at Coal Creek before the terrible 1902

explosion; the photographs of union parades in which the entire community appears to be *in* the parade; and the miner who, until his death in 1999, continued to demand that the company provide him, as a retiree, coal to heat his home as per “his collective agreement.”

*A World Apart* is a good book that deserves a wide readership in British Columbia. Aside from the work of Allan Seager and another collection edited by Wayne Norton with Naomi Miller,<sup>1</sup> the Crowsnest Pass has not figured much in historical writing about British Columbia. This neglect may have reinforced the feeling of the writers that the Pass was “A World Apart.” My sense is that lives of the people of the Pass shared many similarities with those of other working people in the resource industries of British Columbia in the twentieth century. This suggests that we need a new synthesis of the labour and working-class history of this province.

<sup>1</sup> Wayne Norton and Naomi Miller, eds., *The Forgotten Side of the Border: British Columbia's Elk Valley and Crowsnest Pass* (Kamloops: Plateau Press, 1998).

*Tales of Ghosts: First Nations Art in British Columbia, 1922–61*  
Ronald W. Hawker

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002. 248 pp. \$27.95 paper

MEGAN A. SMETZER,  
Vancouver, BC

THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC trends in the scholarly literature pertaining to First Nations material and visual culture have leaned primarily towards stylistic analysis, connoisseurship, and tracing the rise, decline, and “renaissance” of this production. Ronald Hawker’s book, *Tales of Ghosts: First Nations Art*

*in British Columbia, 1922–61*, takes a refreshing and much needed new approach to twentieth-century First Nations art in British Columbia. By focusing on the virtually ignored mid-twentieth century and using discourse analysis, Hawker reveals a wide range of objects and situations that challenge the validity of

the “renaissance” narrative. Through the close examination of several “representational projects,” Hawker analyzes the shifting, and often contested, meanings attributed to material culture both inside and outside of First Nations communities. Hawker argues that, “during this era, Northwest Coast objects functioned in a complex and multifaceted manner, at once asserting the integrity and meaningfulness of First Nations identities and resisting the intent and effects of assimilation” (5).

Hawker challenges the modernist trajectory that relegated First Nations peoples to a timeless past by offering an examination of the ways in which First Nations objects were used to create a provincial and national identity through the institutionalization of indigenous “culture.” The well-known events surrounding the raid of the 1922 Cranmer potlatch serve as the author’s starting point. He suggests that the reconfiguration of potlatch regalia from contemporary ceremonial use to ethnographic artefacts in museums enabled local and federal governments to frame First Nations and their objects as pre-history, and place them at the beginning of a narrative about Canada’s national history. Hawker illustrates other aspects of this theme through a series of events that took place during the 1920s, including the relocation of Kwakwaka’wakw poles to Stanley Park, the relocation of Gitksan poles along the Canadian National Railways line, and the National Gallery of Art’s 1927 *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern*. These events, in turn, erased local Salish histories and replaced them with a more generalized notion of “totem pole people,” commodified First Nations objects for tourists, and used First Nations objects as a basis to create a unique “Canadian artistic style” (61).

Hawker proposes that, while colonial power relationships enforced a certain reading of these events, the First Nations involved were not entirely victims and had multiple reasons for participating in the sale of objects. For example, he interprets the relocation of Kwakwaka’wakw poles as a way for certain families to gain a wider audience for lineage and ownership concerns. Hawker names the ambivalent reading of these events the “modernist paradox,” in which a culture appears to disappear even though its members continue to exist.

The second portion of the book examines the shift in the 1940s and 1950s (as a result of the Depression) from Canadian assimilationist policies to those of integration, along with associated projects initiated to combat First Nations poverty and other social ills. Concerned individuals such as George Raley and his Indian Arts and Crafts Board, and Alice Ravenhill’s British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society believed that using recognizable aspects of First Nations culture would facilitate the assimilation of First Nations into dominant social structures and, at the same time, educate the non-First Nations public. Raley and Ravenhill focused on the commodification of First Nations art, both the creation of objects based on older Northwest Coast art forms and the encouragement of new forms.

Hawker points out not only the ways in which these paternalistic projects masked the often horrific realities of First Nations lives but also how they were used by some First Nations as a means for resisting assimilationist policies. Artists such as Mathias Joe, Mungo Martin, and George Clutesi used government-sanctioned events to highlight their Aboriginality and to make public statements about political

issues such as land claims and identity. Moreover, in contesting Peter McNair's argument that mid-twentieth-century objects represented a decline and Martine Reid's belief that these objects had no cultural meaning, Hawker suggests that shifting cultural practices gave these objects cross-cultural value and meaning in ways that were just as important as were those displayed and recognized in nineteenth-century masterpieces.

Finally, Hawker discusses the institutionalization of Northwest Coast objects in the 1950s and 1960s. He focuses on the totem pole salvage expeditions sponsored by the University of British Columbia and the British Columbia Provincial Museum. The relocation of poles from abandoned villages to museum collections placed an institutional value on the objects and contributed to their reinterpretation as art. Hawker uses the specific case of Gitanyow (Kitwancool) to illustrate how this First Nations community strategically used institutional practices to record histories of land

ownership in exchange for copies of poles. Throughout the book, Hawker reinforces the complexity of these situations, underlining the conflicts over control and the multiplicity of meanings.

The major criticism of this book is its lack of contemporary First Nations voices. While Hawker successfully utilizes published First Nations sources, he states that his narrative would become too complicated with the inclusion of reminiscences about the past. On the one hand, Hawker's decision seems practical, but on the other, research on First Nations should always be complicated by contemporary voices. As Hawker himself notes: "these objects and images, and the ideas they represent continue to exert a strong influence on the world we share" (179). It has rightly become an ethical responsibility to work collaboratively with First Nations individuals and communities. This criticism aside, Hawker's book is a valuable and significantly new approach to the material and visual production of the Northwest Coast.

*Beaten Down: A History of Interpersonal Violence in the West*  
David Peterson del Mar

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002. 312 pp. \$40.00 cloth

JIM PHILLIPS,  
*University of Toronto*

**D**AVID PETERSON DEL MAR'S work on violence against wives is well known to social and legal historians, and in this important, innovative, and provocative new book, he has broadened his approach to examine interpersonal violence more generally. *Beaten Down* is a history of such violence in eastern Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia (the region he calls the North Pacific Slope), from the

first contacts between Native societies and European traders and settlers to the middle of the twentieth century. The organization is largely chronological, taking the reader from the violence associated with the process of colonization to the 1930s, although there is necessarily a strong thematic element to many chapters, especially the first, which is on colonization. The volume is also explicitly comparative in a number of places,



especially with regard to assessments of the levels and acceptability of extra-legal violence between Canada and the United States.

Three points are crucial to understanding the content, method, and arguments in this book. First, it is about individual acts of interpersonal violence, a phenomenon to which del Mar believes historians have paid too little attention. They have preferred, he argues, to study the collective violence of the riot, the strike, and the vigilante movement, while ignoring most individual acts of violence. While he probably exaggerates historians' lack of interest in individual violence (he himself concedes the considerable recent interest in homicide), he is nonetheless right to suggest that the area deserves a good deal more attention. Second, del Mar largely eschews the use of broad indicators of violence (such as criminal justice statistics or debates over corporal punishment), preferring to try to capture its meaning through more qualitative evidence. Statistical work is employed to suggest general trends, but it often serves as a background and context for a more cultural history. Third, del Mar insists, surely correctly, that interpersonal violence is much more than the product of individual or social pathology and draws its meaning from the particularities of time and place. It is also – a point that del Mar demonstrates very effectively – a complex phenomenon. While he notes that he is “primarily interested in exploring the relationship between power and interpersonal violence” (9), he also shows that that violence has, at different times, been a product of power and a means of producing and sustaining it as well as clear evidence of individual or group powerlessness and a form of resistance.

Within this framework, there is much to admire in *Beaten Down*. The first substantive chapter argues successfully that

violence was an integral part of the colonization process at the level of interactions between settlers and their agents and Aboriginal peoples. Indian agents, missionaries, and individual settlers used violence and saw it as a legitimate aspect of their land acquisition and acculturation missions. It also shows that the nature of Native violence changed, essentially from a phenomenon directed at outsiders to one aimed at others within the same group. The chapter that follows, on violence among settlers, argues that it was an endemic aspect of how social and racial hierarchies were forged and reinforced. My only quibble about these chapters is that the line that Del Mar insists on between individual and collective violence is not always sustainable: if enough settlers and missionaries believed in and used violence in their campaigns for Aboriginal subordination, and did so with the shared understanding that this was a necessary and legitimate activity, then to some extent what is being described is a form of collective violence, albeit one carried out through multiple individual agency. Chapters 4 through 6 are more particular studies of violence, marginality, and race in the major cities of the region after the turn of the century. The first of these is especially good at capturing the ways in which violence was attributed to outsiders and the marginal in a period of high immigration, although that did not mean that all immigrants and ethnic groups were considered violent. The Chinese, for example, were castigated for their supposed moral threat rather than for any physical danger they posed.

In short, Del Mar is successful in revealing the contours of the uses of violence and attitudes towards it in a variety of different locales within the region and at a variety of different times. In some ways, the book can be divided into two distinct halves. The first three

chapters represent a chronology of violence in the nineteenth century, with the principal message of Chapter 3 being that, largely judged by homicide rates, by the late nineteenth century, violence had declined. The three chapters that follow are more particular case studies set in the twentieth century. While they take the story down to the Second World War, they are less concerned with chronology and tend more to capture the nature of interpersonal violence and the concerns of the respectable about its prevalence. It is less clear when and why

violence continued to decline after 1900, although there are suggestions, in the introduction and in the epilogue, that change did take place and that violence became a less significant part of everyday life over time. The author would perhaps concede this critique: his is not intended to be a "complete history" for he is "more interested in using time and place to explore the nuances" of the relationship between violence and power (9). The book certainly succeeds admirably in that ambition.

### *Facing History: Portraits from Vancouver*

Karen Love

Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery and  
Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002. 160 pp. Illus. \$29.95 paper

NEIL SUTHERLAND,

*University of British Columbia*

**F**ACING HISTORY: *Portraits from Vancouver* grew out of an exhibition at North Vancouver's Presentation House Gallery, curated by the book's editor, Karen Love. In her introductory essay, Love explains that *Facing History* "cannot be a portrait of Vancouver, not in the comprehensive way we imagine such a thing. Rather it is a visual cacophony of possibilities, a fulsome beginning hinting variously at the specifics of each unique individual and the complex world of histories and environments which we (as readers) think might have influenced his or her world" (13).

What makes up this particular "cacophony"? The front cover displays one-half of Jin-Me Yoon's diptych portraying the child Hanum Yoon-Henderson; the

back cover, John Helcermanas's close-up photograph of boxer Elio Ius; in between, photos, sketches, sculptures, and paintings of dozens of visitors or residents of Vancouver between the years 1950 and 2001. Foncie Pulice's "Electric" camera captured some as they walked along Granville shopping or on a date. Newspaper photographers Bill Cunningham, Colin Price, Brian Kent, and Glenn Baglo caught, respectively, a rueful young man in handcuffs, Terry Fox on the Marathon of Hope, Mr. Peanut filing his nomination papers, and Pierre Trudeau autographing a photo of himself for a youngster. In one intriguing news photograph, Jim Ryan captured Premier W.A.C. Bennett in the midst of a crowd of children. One is bemused to see clearly in the background the men's entrance to

a beer parlour. (The text does not explain, but surely not, “Okay, kids, the drinks are on me!”)

More formality characterizes other portraits. Fred Douglas, Chick Rice, Diane Evans, and Robert Minden posed or found their subjects in studios or at such outdoor locations as a backyard, Exhibition Park, or the beach at White Rock. In Marian Penner Bancroft’s installations, Allyson Clay’s portrait performances, and such multimedia compositions as Jeff Wall’s light boxes and Colette Whiten’s embroidery embedded in glass beads, photographers moved beyond the boundaries of traditional portraits or action shots. Roy Kiyooka makes three appearances: as a photographer (especially of a series on a street festival), as the subject of a portrait by Fred Douglas, and as the subject of an essay by poet Robin Blaser.

A commentary accompanies some portraits. Jerry Pethick explains his flash portrait “Simulation – Self-Portrait with Abdomen of an Ant.” Paul Wong describes the origin and fate of three frames taken from a series of anti-racism television spots. The best essays, such as Sarah Milroy’s on Fred Douglas’s photograph of Doris Shadbolt or Sandra Semchuk’s on her composite “Ukrainians Vote to go Their Own Way” provide a modest commentary on, or extension of, the picture. Others perhaps strive too hard for effect. Of Alvin Armstrong’s television still photograph, “An Aspect of Crime,” Colin Browne suggests it “might just be the kind of Ur-photograph that lined the metaphysical nest of photo-conceptualism in this querulous, uncertain, prolific place” (68).

In a concluding essay entitled “Visible and Unknowable,” art critic Bob Sherrin reflects on some of the theoretical issues

surrounding portraiture and the identity of subjects. He explains, for example, that from “the early Renaissance onward, the portrait is expected both to create an acceptably accurate likeness and to reveal its subject’s inner life” (142). Further, photographic portraits “are the images of someone not present – the mark therefore of absence, as true of a portrait in a gallery as of the photo of a loved one tucked in a traveller’s notebook” (146). Moreover, “it is within time, and therefore inescapably within memory ... that photographic portraits draw us. And what do we sketch within them but some form of ourselves, individual and collective entwined, momentary and impressive” (147). Thus, “when given the time and the place, we will choose to contemplate a portrait from – not of – Vancouver and therein we will individually create identities for the city we collectively call home” (ibid.).

Despite their complex arguments, neither Love’s nor Sherrin’s essay lays out a coherent enough overarching theme, or set of specific claims, against which to evaluate *Facing History*. On the other hand, Doris Shadbolt’s comment, appearing on the fly, gets it exactly right. As she says, the book “comes across less as an additive assemblage of individually arresting images than as a loosely woven visual fabric evocative in its collective understatedness.”

Some books only reveal their treasures – such as Bennett with the kids outside a pub or the page displaying a pair of photos, one of a sterile high school classroom and the other of a crowd of enthusiastic teens at an Elvis Presley concert – through repeated skimming and browsing. In the best sense of these terms, *Facing History* is such a book. Skim and browse.

*Launching History: The Saga of Burrard Dry Dock*  
Francis Mansbridge

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2002. 150 pp. Illus. \$39.95 cloth

ANDREW HILDRED,  
*University of British Columbia*

**I**N 1894, ON THE SHORES of False Creek, Alfred “Andy” Wallace began what would become the largest shipbuilding conglomerate on the West Coast of Canada. Specializing in wooden fishing boats, Wallace soon diversified into wooden tugs. By 1906 he had moved his shipyards from False Creek to North Vancouver. Here the shipyards remained in operation until 1992. The company went on to employ three generations of Wallaces before it was sold to corporate interests in the early 1970s. Francis Mansbridge’s *Launching History: The Saga of Burrard Dry Dock* is a popular account of Wallace’s shipyard. Mansbridge and Harbour Publishing have chosen a timely subject, as the former shipyards in North Vancouver are currently being transformed from their industrial origins into mixed commercial and residential use. *Launching History* serves as a reminder of what was once an integral part of the North Vancouver waterfront and a significant contributor to British Columbia’s economic diversity. Drawing on a diverse and extensive collection of company records, personal interviews, an unpublished corporate history, and a published union account by former shipyard workers, Mansbridge has woven together a history of “significant ships and the men and women who made them possible”(xi). These human stories combined with the corporate history of Burrard Dry Dock provide an interesting insight into local community. For example, Alfred Wallace’s decision to change his name from the English-

sounding “Alfred” to the Scot-friendly “Andy” says much about the Wallaces’ customers, his workforce, and Vancouver’s early business elite (10).

While the corporate history of Burrard Dry Dock is intimately tied to the Wallace family, Mansbridge recognizes the importance of other contributors. His book includes highlighted excerpts from personal interviews and both company and union sources. These are presented as “local colour” outside of Mansbridge’s formal narrative. But once again, these human stories make the book interesting. For example, when corporate giant Versatile Manufacturing assumed control in 1978, Mansbridge foreshadows some of the problems of the new ownership, which was more concerned with the bottom line than with building good ships. The new owners brought in a personnel director, “an American, a Vietnam pilot shot down three times in Vietnam in his helicopter. He was on the BC Lions Grey Cup team in 1964” (162). The union president at the time remembered their first meeting. Luckily, he had been forewarned that the new personnel director would try to “break his hand” when they were introduced. The new personnel director represented the company’s hard-line approach to labour and the unions in the shipyards.

Corporate histories often have little to say about unions and organized labour. Bradford Mitchell’s *Every Kind of Shipwork: A History of Todd Shipyards Corporation 1916-1981* (1981), almost 200 pages into the text, briefly mentions a

union, and then only to note that company profits were lower due to a prolonged strike. Todd Shipyards Corporation was a contemporary of Wallace and Burrard Dry Dock and also a competitor with shipbuilding and repair yards in Seattle and Tacoma. In the American Northeast, where Todd's head office was located, Todd gained a reputation for ruthlessly opposing the organizing efforts of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA). *David Palmer's Organizing the Shipyards: Union Strategy in Three Northeast Ports, 1933-1945* (1998) provides a useful account of the IUMSWA. The official corporate history of Todd Shipyards avoids the topic of unionization among its workers.

Mansbridge has taken a slightly different approach to unionization. He quotes frequently from union sources. He conducted personal interviews with present and past union leaders, and he repeatedly draws from a union-published book: *A History of Shipbuilding in British Columbia* (1977). And yet, in his introduction, Mansbridge claims that the union movement is "outside the

scope of this narrative" (xi). In a book that purports to be about the ships and the men and women who built them, I would argue, the union movement is integral to this story. Although he recognizes the biases inherent in the company sources, Mansbridge often resorts to presenting the company view. For example, he repeatedly cites the company line that wages on the West Coast were too high for the shipyard to remain competitive. Given Mansbridge's use of union sources, I would have liked some further discussion of the union and its place in the shipyards.

In the end, Mansbridge and Harbour Publishing have produced a very well written and well illustrated popular history of the Burrard Dry Dock company. Hundreds of photographs grace this book and add to its visual appeal. I would highly recommend *Launching History* not only to those fascinated by ships and maritime history but also to those interested in local and community histories. *Launching History* will serve as a longtime reminder of this province's shipbuilding past – a history that seems almost already forgotten.

*British Columbia, the Pacific Province: Geographical Essays*  
Colin J.B. Wood, Editor

Victoria: Western Geographical Press, 2002.  
358 pp. Illus., maps. \$32.00 paper

KENNETH G. BREALEY,  
*University College of the Fraser Valley*

UNTIL RECENTLY, geographers looking for a reasonably comprehensive, but decidedly current, introductory text or compilation of essays having a regional and/or thematic focus on the geography of British Columbia had little with which to work. Paul

Koroscil's edited 1991 *British Columbia: Geographical Essays in Honour of A. McPherson* was geographically uneven and narrowly focused, while Charles Forward's 1989 *British Columbia: Its Resources and People* was, even by the early 1990s, increasingly dated. This was

a serious omission, especially since almost every department of geography in this province has “the geography of British Columbia” as one of its core introductory courses! Now, however, this lacuna has been nicely filled by two new contributions. First off the mark in 2000, and reviewed in *BC Studies* 132, was Brett McGillivray’s *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition*. Second, in 2002, and reviewed here, is this, the thirty-sixth publication of the University of Victoria’s long-running Western Geographical series and, thus, a work that adopts a rather different, and in places more conceptually demanding, framework than does McGillivray’s.

Indeed, in terms of overall form and style, this edited compilation is virtually a carbon copy of Forward’s text. Seven of the book’s nineteen chapters – landforms and natural hazards (Foster), biogeoclimatics (Edgell), land-based recreation (Downie), climate (Tuller), marine-based recreation (Dearden), the Chinese community (Lai), and agriculture (the editor) – are effectively revisions of earlier chapters by the same authors in Forward’s collection; another eight – historical cartography (Keller), water (Smith), tourism (Rollins), minerals (Harris), energy (Newcomb), forestry (Vyse), fisheries (the editor and Corpé), and regionalism (the editor) – are also revisions but are written by different authors. New in this compilation are chapters on provincial geopolitics (Thomas), the space economy (the editor), land-use planning (the editor, Corpé and Jackson), and Native land claims (Duerden). Whether because they mostly dovetailed with my own interests, because they dealt with topics only addressed piecemeal in Forward, or because they deal with a truly post-modern set of geographical challenges,

I also found these four chapters to be among the strongest in the collection. That said, the overall quality of these chapters is very good. They all display sound scholarship and are free of jargon. Tabular and graphic support is thorough and is displayed with a consistent style. Both in content and legibility, the cartography, in particular, is a huge improvement. I found no typographical errors, which, coupled with the above, reflects a careful editorial hand. In addition to the usual primary or secondary references, most chapters direct the reader to relevant Internet sites – an important addition that reflects a growing scholarly reliance on digital sources.

If only because we have long needed a book like this, my quibbles with the collection are correspondingly few. While there is an introductory chapter, its discussion of the regional makeup of the province remains fairly standard and does not always seem relevant to many of the following chapters, in which the approach is largely thematic or topical. The ordering of the chapters is also curious. Doubtless the province is moving, if fitfully, away from a resource-based economy; however, chapters on forestry, mining, fishing, and energy are at the end of the compilation, while chapters on tourism and Native land claims come much earlier. I’d have reversed this order to make the causal geographical and temporal aspects of provincial change and continuity over the past fifteen years more explicit. In either case, a brief editorial preface would have helped. In addition, the book lacks an index, which lessens its utility as a quick reference guide.

It is on this view, perhaps, that some comparisons with McGillivray’s text are in order. Instructors teaching the geography of British Columbia at an introductory level, and who need a relatively

accessible text, more Spartan (and thus more readily grasped) graphic and tabular support, and a length that is just about right for a thirteen-week course, are probably best served by McGillivray. Those seeking a somewhat “thicker” text – whether for use in a more directed course on the geography of British Columbia or in more advanced courses in other subdisciplines seeking more theoretically informed “case studies”

from British Columbia (such as in resource and environmental studies, recreation or political geography, and planning) – will get more out of this compilation. The nice thing is that we now have a choice. While it may not have been intended as such, I found this book a most welcome update of Forward’s text, and one that will be welcomed by scholars and instructors both within and without geography.

*Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law*

John McLaren, Robert Menzies,  
and Dorothy E. Chunn, Editors

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002. 314 pp. \$85.00 cloth / \$29.95 paper

CATHERINE CARSTAIRS,  
*University of British Columbia*

**R**EGULATING LIVES adds to a rapidly growing body of work in Canadian legal history and in the history of moral regulation. The collection should be of great interest to historians of the family, gender, race relations, and the state, and several of the individual chapters are excellent.

Dorothy Chunn’s provocative chapter examines the impact of the criminalization of incest between 1890 and 1940, and questions the use of the criminal law to regulate the “private.” Chunn points out that the criminalization of incest was part of the late nineteenth-century move towards regulating all sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage through the law rather than through the family, the church, and other community institutions. Using case files, she shows that going to court was an ordeal for the children and young women who accused their fathers and brothers of incest. They

were forced to tell their experiences of sexual abuse at least twice in the presence of the accused and were interrogated about their sexual histories, while the man accused was generally only cross-examined once. Convictions were far from assured, which reinforced the idea that incest was an atypical act rather than an effect of unequal power relations within the family. Most of the families involved in these cases were poor. The poor, of course, had fewer options than did the rich for dealing with such problems privately. Incest, Chunn concludes, is rooted in structural inequalities, and the criminal law is limited in its ability to deal with such problems.

John McLaren’s chapter, “The State, Child Snatching and the Law: The Seizure and Indoctrination of Sons of Freedom Children in British Columbia, 1950–60,” tells the complex story of the

efforts made by various provincial governments to persuade and to force Doukhobor parents to educate their children in public schools from the 1920s to the 1950s. This chapter raises questions about the extent to which civil liberties for ethnic minorities improved in the post-Second World War period. McLaren includes detailed discussions of Doukhobor leadership and the impact of political changes in British Columbia and in Canada. Although his chapter is a difficult read, McLaren shows where the power to make decisions resided, why decisions were made, and what impact they had on the people involved.

Robert Menzies focuses on the deportation of sixty-five male mental patients to China in 1935. He shows that asylum superintendents in British Columbia had fought for the deportation of mentally ill Chinese men as early as 1899. The chapter demonstrates that Chinese men in BC asylums received little treatment, were occasionally attacked by White patients and even attendants, and were often extremely isolated because of their poor command of English. This is the first work of which I am aware to deal explicitly with racial minorities within the asylum, and it provides a valuable addition to the asylum literature as well as to the literature on deportation.

The most influential literature on anti-venereal campaigns in Canada has argued that women, particularly working-class women, were blamed for the spread of the disease. By contrast, Renisa Mawani argues that the efforts to control venereal disease between 1914 and 1935 were directed at all Canadians: men and women, rich and poor, moral and

disreputable. Mawani shows that moral reformers were concerned with constructing normative heterosexualities for men well as for women and that men, as well as women, could be villains in the anti-venereal drama.

The remaining chapters are not as strong as those just mentioned. Michaela Freund provides an engagingly written piece on venereal disease; Robert Adamoski explores the shift from the older institutional model of charity to the new "scientific" social work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Gerry Ferguson writes on the early history of asylums in British Columbia; Mimi Ajzenstadt examines the impact of prohibition and temperance on racial and ethnic minorities; and Jay Nelson contributes an analysis of fur-trade marriage that relies primarily on previously published secondary literature.

My one real criticism is that *Regulating Lives* lacks an overall focus – both topically and theoretically. The introduction starts with an accessible account of the differences between theories of social control, moral regulation, and governmentality. The editors indicate that they hope that the collection will (1) debate the theoretical merits of social control, moral regulation, and governmentality and (2) compare regulation in British Columbia to the rest of Canada, and/or other White settler societies. Unfortunately, most of the authors neither address these theoretical debates nor make many explicit comparisons to other places. Despite this weakness, *Regulating Lives* provides a very solid addition to the history of regulation in British Columbia.



*Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology*  
Regna Darnell

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. 373 pp. US\$24.95 paper

MICHAEL ASCH  
*University of Victoria*

IT IS FREQUENTLY asserted that contemporary anthropology is distinctive in that it represents a radical, self-conscious departure from its earlier traditions. While accepting that this orientation has been of value particularly in exposing the baggage of earlier iterations of key themes, Regna Darnell demurs with respect to its boldest claims for, as she sees it, the field today represents less a radical shift than a historical development of themes that first emerged at the beginning of the discipline itself. It is due to "rhetoric" alone that this genealogy has been rendered "invisible." Hence the title, *Invisible Genealogies*.

While this focus provides its theme, *Invisible Genealogies* is not, in fact, a treatise directed solely at making this particular point; rather, in demonstrating these links between then and now, Darnell creates a lens through which she writes a history of what she describes as key features of the Americanist tradition in anthropology. This tradition, as Darnell describes it, was founded by Boas and developed through the work of his students, Kroeber and Sapir, as well as their close associates, particularly Whorf and Parsons. In her reading, this tradition is dominated by two linked analytical dynamics. The first involves the pull between a focus on exploring culture as a collective expression and a focus on examining how the personalities of individuals shape and are shaped by culture. The second involves the extent to which the focus of research

is to be on the history of a culture or on the psychological/philosophical impact of language and culture on shaping "worldview." While each analytic is relevant to establishing links that make the genealogy visible, Darnell's case for continuity is best established through her analysis of work on the role of language and culture in shaping worldview and on the writing of life histories. This is supported by her sensitive portrayal of the role of non-social scientific ways of reporting on cultural life (e.g., through poetic forms of discourse) – a role that has existed virtually from the outset of the field.

*Invisible Genealogies* is not oriented towards regional ethnography, except in the large sense that one dimension of Americanist anthropology, as Darnell defines it, involves a regional focus on the indigenous peoples of North America. Thus, in the text, reference to the culture or language of any First Nation is provided largely in order to illustrate a general point concerning the theoretical orientations of the anthropologist whose research is under discussion. Nonetheless, for those interested in anthropological work in British Columbia, this focus provides an important aspect of the text. Depictions of First Nations, particularly Northwest Coast peoples such as the Kwakwaka'wakw, have, for better or for worse, played a significant role in the anthropology of individuals whose work Darnell addresses (and, thus, in the anthropology of those who follow in that tradition). In particular,

one can, by implication, trace the link between the theoretical concerns of anthropologists and the manner in which, for example, the cultural life of First Nations in British Columbia has been represented as well as the frame within which particular institutions, such as the potlatch, have been interpreted.

In laying out the case in *Invisible Genealogies*, Darnell makes an important contribution to the developing field of the history of anthropology. However, I would suggest that this work, despite the subtitle, is not “A History of Americanist Anthropology” as such. There are many strains that have remained unexplored, such as the work of Steward and the neo-evolutionists as well as that of Eggan and others from the Chicago School who, I think, are properly considered Americanists within the terms of her definition. I believe that this book’s particular contribution to the

history of anthropology lies in its exploration of the development of the interpretivist and humanist strains in Americanist anthropology and, particularly, the intimate connection between those strains and that aspect of “anthropological linguistics” concerned with the social and cultural dimensions of language. This makes much sense as Darnell is one of the leading authorities on both the history of and research into that area of study. For a reader more interested in the impact of anthropology on the study of First Nations, *Invisible Genealogies* provides insights into how issues generated within anthropological discourse have coloured the ways in which First Nations in British Columbia and elsewhere in North America are represented. As such, it provides a glimpse into the intimate connection between a chosen intellectual orientation and what gets emphasized in anthropological description.

*Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865*

Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 679 pp. Illus. US\$125.00 cloth

BRIAN W. DIPPPIE

*University of Victoria, BC*

**P**IONEER PHOTOGRAPHERS of the Far West is the finest reference work I have ever read, with the emphasis on read. The clear, precise, mainly biographical entries – some 1,100 of them arranged in alphabetical order – are a tribute to Peter Palmquist and Thomas Kailbourn’s scholarship, literary skills, and sheer perseverance in seeing a project of this magnitude through to completion. Their book covers all those

involved in the photographic profession in the years 1840 through 31 December 1865 who worked in the present United States west of (and overlapping) the continental divide, in Mexico, Central America, and Hawaii, and in British Columbia – a generous definition of the “Far West” that should appeal to a wide audience of academics, collectors, and local history buffs. In addition, it covers moving panoramas – a popular form of

entertainment that often involved some photographic preparation and that served as precursors to motion pictures. Palmquist and Kailbourn follow each individual profiled through to the end of his or her (nearly forty women are included) life. Many of the entries are short since a single newspaper mention might be the only reference available. Undoubtedly, subsequent research stimulated by this book will flesh out a few of these figures. The longer entries – up to seven pages for the most significant photographers – turn names into people and provide assessments of their professional accomplishments. They also reveal the prodigious research in primary and secondary sources undergirding the entire enterprise.

Several features facilitate this biographical dictionary's usefulness as a reference work. Each entry begins with basic data: birth, death, and a synopsis of when and where the subject worked in the Far West. Sources are cited in full in the accompanying notes, collections containing examples of the photographer's work are listed, and boldface serves to cross-reference individuals with entries of their own. The book is illustrated with images of the photo-

graphers and their establishments, and with examples of their craft. Of the five appendices, perhaps the most useful is broken down by geographical area. California, of course, leads the way – 791 photographers were lured to the “Golden State” – while British Columbia boasts thirty-five photographers, a few of whom were travellers who made photographs en route to the Coast. Two of the better-known figures in BC history, Richard H. Carr and Amor de Cosmos, merit substantial entries but do not appear in the geographical appendix under British Columbia because their photographic careers predated their residency in Victoria. Carr is showcased because his San Francisco daguerreian gallery, opened 25 January 1849, was “the first recorded establishment of that kind in the Pacific West”; his daughter Emily, described rather wonderfully as “a writer and artist of some renown,” is here relegated to a footnote (154-5).

Individuals and libraries with an interest in Western cultural history will find *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West* an indispensable reference tool. It is a work of meticulous scholarship that also, from entry to entry, offers a fascinating read.

### *From the Baltic to Russian America, 1829-1836*

Alix O'Grady

Kingston, ON: Limestone Press, 2002. 304 pp. Maps. \$28.00 paper

BRUCE M. WATSON,

*Vancouver Community College*

**A**LIX O'GRADY'S *From the Baltic to Russian America, 1829-1836* should be of interest to BC historians concerned with the broader aspects of the Pacific Slopes fur trade in general and of Russian colonial history

in particular. O'Grady, a native of Riga, Latvia, brings to life the historical conditions during seven years in the life of Elisabeth von Wrangell, the wife of Russian American Company (RAC) administrator Baron Ferdinand von

Wrangell. The book covers their journey to, stay at, and journey from Russian America, a Russian outpost paradoxically dominated by Baltic Germans and Finns. The book focuses on the life of Elisabeth, part of which is told by the baroness, the rest through the journals and letters of others.

The first section of the book, spoken mostly in the voice of Elisabeth, covers eighteen months of the von Wrangells' trip through Russia, Siberia, and across the North Pacific to the Russian-American colonies to Sitka (Novo-Arkhangel'sk). The educated feminine voice remains strong throughout the description of this trip by coach from St. Petersburg to Irkutsk, riverboat to Yakutsk, horseback to Okhotsk, and finally to Sitka (Novo-Arkhangel'sk) by boat. The Wrangells follow the standard route covered by Russians and Western European RAC employees alike (some of whom went on to join other companies on the Northwest Coast) on their way to Alaska and the reverse route of many others (such as George Simpson and John DeWolfe). Particularly interesting are Elisabeth's decidedly feminine observations about her two visits over the border to China as they may throw light on the realities and difficulties of the Russia-China trade.

The second part of the book covers the baron's five-year-term administration of the RAC at Sitka. During this period, Elisabeth's voice grows silent after the

death of their daughter, and, with the exception of one letter addressed to her mother, her writing ceases. Instead, background information such as a letter from the baron to her parents, extensive entries from Ferdinand's diary, and later comments by Hudson's Bay Company officers, and others predominate this section. Of particular interest to Pacific Slopes scholars is the baron's description of the treatment of Native and mixed-blood peoples and their obligations. The third part of the book, about the voyage home, is presented almost entirely through the baron's writings and is followed by illustrations, a bibliography, and a glossary.

This publication is one of many put out by Richard Pierce's Limestone Press championing the history of Russian America. He has spent years translating original and published Russian sources. *From the Baltic* builds on Pierce's research and is enhanced by O'Grady's translations of letters. Her writing is clear and engaging, and the story remains vital due to her careful treatment of context.

The book's shortcomings are few and can be overlooked because of the overall value of the work. More maps could have been provided of the Russian-Siberian journey. Further, some errors of pagination in the index could perhaps be corrected in the next printing. In short, Alix O'Grady's *From the Baltic to Russian America, 1829-1836* is a welcome addition to Pacific Slopes research.

*Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*  
Reid Shier, Editor

Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery/Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002.  
119 pp. Illus. (some col.). Col. poster insert. \$22.95 paper

JILL WADE

*British Columbia Open University*

**E**VERY BUILDING on 100 West Hastings is a panorama by Vancouver's acclaimed film and video artist Stan Douglas. Without exaggeration, it is a marvellous and monumental photograph of the façade of buildings across the street from the old Woodward's building in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. As a recent acquisition of the Vancouver Art Gallery, it joins works by many other photo-conceptualists, including the internationally renowned Jeff Wall. Arguably, the photo-conceptual link between issues in art and society, so critical in Douglas's panorama, is traceable not only to Wall's photographs but to the earliest work of Iain Baxter, who taught in the mid-1960s in the University of British Columbia's Fine Arts Department.

While a representation of the south side of the 100-block of West Hastings, the photograph is in fact a contrived image quite unlike the panoramas of the street shot earlier in the twentieth century. No people and no traffic move along Hastings Street. Strategically illuminated rooms on three storeys are vacant, and other windows and doors are boarded up. Significantly, the 66-centimetre-by-426.9-centimetre chromogenic print is multiperspective: there is no vanishing point. (Douglas converted twenty-one photographs into a single, almost seamless image using digital and high-resolution scanning technology.) The powerful, constructed image, surrounded by an unusually broad,

white border, reveals an urban wasteland. Without doubt, Douglas, who consistently bridges the divide between art and social issues in his work, imposes this impression of emptiness on the viewer.

Reid Shier, the editor of *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*, has transferred the idea of a wasteland to the content of the book. With its cover illustration of a section of the photograph and with its pocket insert of the whole image, this slender paperback is first of all a catalogue published in late 2002 for an exhibition of Douglas's work at Vancouver's Contemporary Art Gallery. Yet, by another measure, the book is a collection of essays by several authors who use the panorama's message to make sense of today's social crisis in the Downtown Eastside. Shier establishes the idea of abandonment in his introduction: in the 1990s, many artists and gallery owners, including Shier himself, fled when the drug culture took hold of the Downtown Eastside.

The image of a wasteland engages all the essayists of *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*. The geographers Jeff Sommers and Nick Blomley characterize today's social crisis in "the worst block in Vancouver" and the Downtown Eastside as a conflict between impoverished residents and gentrifying "settlers" aiming to "reconquer" what they perceive to be a "waste land." In building their argument, Sommers and Blomley apply the concept of stigmatization, based upon local and theoretical dis-

courses about “the ghetto,” and “the myth of the ‘new urban frontier,’” developed by Neil Smith to explain gentrification in the United States. Elsewhere in the book, Smith and Jeff Derksen, both cultural geographers, use the “new urban frontier” thesis to address the globalization of gentrification and its implications for cities like Vancouver. The argument for “reconquest” is compelling and will inspire debate. Still, given the wealth of original evidence and the availability of some interpretive literature, Sommers and Blomley could enrich that argument by substantiating more fully the slow decline of the Downtown Eastside and by differentiating more clearly the “reconquest” of today from all the instances of “resettlement” since contact. The challenge for historians will be to square the “new urban frontier” thesis with the old one of Frederick Jackson Turner.

To underline the violence associated with the wasteland of the Downtown

Eastside, the art historian Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, whose scholarly interest is the early British panorama, analyzes the formal “haunted spaces” of Douglas’s print and ties them to the shocking disappearance of over sixty Vancouver women since 1978. Additionally, Smith and Derksen warn of the potential for strife accompanying gentrification. Is the empty Woodward’s building, they ask, another flashpoint in the global conflict between local residents and capitalist “gentrifiers”?

Unlike the social commentators and activists of other times, Douglas, Shier, and the essayists offer no explicit political solutions to the tragedy of the Downtown Eastside. Yet the concurrence of the exhibition of Douglas’s panorama and the publication of this catalogue with the Woodward’s squat and the 2002 Vancouver civic election is at least an implicit solution.

### *Chasing the Comet: A Scottish Canadian Life*

Patricia Koretchuk

Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002. 261 pp. \$29.95 paper

MICHAEL VANCE

*Saint Mary’s University*

**A**LTHOUGH HIS NAME does not appear in the title, this book follows the eventful career of David Cadlow, who was born in Dundrennan, Ayrshire, but spent most of his life contributing to the development of agriculture in British Columbia. Written as a first-person narrative, *Chasing the Comet* highlights Cadlow’s life experience – an experience that spans almost the entire twentieth century. There are very few first-hand accounts of Scottish im-

migration to Canada in the last century, and much of the evidence is fragmentary and understudied. As a consequence, *Chasing the Comet* does offer a seldom-heard perspective on the Scottish immigrant and settlement experience. It would, however, be most fruitfully read in conjunction with Marjory Harper’s broader examination of early twentieth-century migration, *Emigration from Scotland between the Wars: Opportunity or Exile?* (1998). As Harper’s study

indicates, Scottish migrants tended, like Cadlow, to be from the Lowlands rather than the Highlands; however, unlike Cadlow, they tended to originate in urban industrial cities rather than in rural agricultural communities.

For David Cadlow, the early training on his father's Scottish farm accounted for success in a career that involved experience working at McGill's Macdonald College farm in Quebec in the 1920s, eking out a living at mixed farming in the BC Interior during the early days of the Depression, and accepting a series of farm manager positions from the 1930s to the 1960s. In all of these contexts, what he identifies as his Scottish training is always present, helping Cadlow to solve problems, whether with crops, livestock, or labourers. The narrative also connects David Cadlow's emigrant and settlement experience to the coincidental development of British Columbia's institutions. In particular, a large section of the text is devoted to detailing Cadlow's contributions to the Colony Farm attached to the Essondale Asylum in Coquitlam. The shift in treatment of the mentally ill from work therapy in the 1930s to reliance on sedation in the 1960s clearly disturbed Cadlow, but most of the narrative focuses on farming practices (189). In addition, the importance of broader Scottish social connections is highlighted as a key factor in allowing Cadlow to obtain positions of responsibility and influence. For example, the narrative attributes his hiring at Macdonald College to his Scottish accent and connections (27). Moreover, the broader Scottish community often appears in the text with frequent references to Scottish

societies. Indeed, David Cadlow met his future wife, Peggy McMillan, at a Scottish dance in Vernon in 1933 (113). Although the marriage lasted over fifty years, very little space is given to discussion of domestic life, thus reflecting broader Scottish patriarchal attitudes. It is Cadlow's career that seems to matter most to the narrator.

So far, *Chasing the Comet* is the only male account in the "Life Writing" series published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press. The other titles in the series clearly reflect the feminist goal of promoting "life writing" as both an object of study and as a practice. "Life writing," in this context, gives voice to the marginalized, and *Chasing the Comet* does not fit easily into this framework. The text is complicated by Patricia Koretchuk's decision to combine her own editorial comments and Cadlow's orally recorded memories into a first-person narrative. If a White writer were to adopt the voice of a Salish cannery worker in order to recount her life, the problem would be obvious. While Koretchuk acknowledges what she is doing, she does not resolve the issue of appropriation that her text raises. Indeed, the unresolved tension between the point of view of the writer and the subject of this book is clearly displayed in an interview with both of them, which is published on the Wilfrid Laurier University Press Web site. According to Koretchuk, the book is "like a good novel, it ... informs and gives insight into the humor and drama of the human condition ... [It] offers readers the opportunity to escape to a no less personally challenging, but simpler time." But, David Cadlow asserts, "It is my life. I can hold it in my hand."

*The Last Island: A Naturalist's Sojourn on Triangle Island*  
Alison Watt

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2002. 192 pp. Illus., \$34.95 cloth

PHILLIP TEECE

*Greater Victoria Public Library (retired)*

ONE OF THE SALIENT features of British Columbia's geography is its myriad coastal islands. Among the wildest and most remote of these, the ecological reserve Triangle Island lies in the open Pacific Ocean thirty miles west of Cape Scott at Vancouver Island's northern tip.

*The Last Island* is a naturalist's journal of her personal association with this wild place – an association that has spanned more than twenty years. Biologist Alison Watt spent her first sojourn on the island as a seabird research assistant in 1980, an experience that, while in many ways exceedingly harsh, initiated her subsequent long-term fascination with Triangle Island. She emphasizes the rather grim context of the adventure by recounting something of the island's history. An early (1909-10) attempt at operating a major human-operated lighthouse on the island was doomed to failure by the severity of conditions. At a later point in the book, Watt tells us how the ruggedness of this environment cost the life of her colleague Anne Vallee.

An even deeper context is provided as Watt examines the archaeological evidence of the Yutinux, a Kwakiutl people who "moved easily among these islands in canoes hewn from the massive cedars of Vancouver Island" (59). By contrast, in our technological age, contact with Triangle Island (chiefly by chartered helicopter) seems to have become a more cumbersome and uncertain process.

The present attraction of the island for Watt and other biologists arises from

its very great ecological importance. She describes the precarious situation that she and her colleague discovered among the large puffin colony, whose continued strength – or otherwise – has been the major focus of their research. Other populations at risk there include Steller's sealions and more than half the entire planet's population of Cassin's auklets. In this remote location, unique features of behaviour and evolution have begun to arise: "these islands might have puzzled even Darwin" (92). Watt draws attention to another kind of evolution – in our own behaviour: Triangle Island now shelters a protected rookery of (typically) about 800 sea lions; however, as recently as the 1950s, the federal Department of Fisheries sponsored a machine-gunning "cull" that killed 2,000 of these animals.

In *The Last Island*, Alison Watt attempts – with very great success – a difficult synthesis: scientific information with personal reminiscence. As a personal journal, the book is eloquent, even poetic. The loneliness of long months spent on this isolated island, the difficulties (and triumphs) of having only one human companion in such a wild place, and the growing attachment to the island's stormy beauty unfold evocatively on the pages of this daily record. I was fascinated by Watt's observation regarding the battle to concentrate after months in the wild solitude: "Each day I spent more and more time thinking about less and less" (133).

In subsequent years, the death of her colleague Anne in a cliff-climbing



accident has given the island a darker tone for Watt. Perhaps partly in light of that accident (Watt does not explicitly make this connection), British Columbia Parks has established a new policy requiring that parties of researchers on Triangle Island comprise not fewer than three persons.

I've composed this review in such a way as to save the best part for last: this book would be worth its price for Alison Watt's stunning illustrations alone.

Forty-seven spontaneous watercolour sketches from her island notebooks show the topography of the island and the flora and bird-life of the place with a degree of feeling that I doubt any photographer could capture.

*The Last Island* is an important new BC book. Every public and academic library should own it, and readers with a concern for one of British Columbia's most beautiful and fragile ecological reserves will want it on their private shelves.